

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 204760

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XM, PFOR

SUBJECT: ARA WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS AUGUST 18-24

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR TODMAN RETURNED 8/22 FROM A MOST USEFUL 10 DAY TRIP TO THE 4 SOUTHERN CONE COUNTRIES. THE PRESIDENT IS INVITING LATIN CHIEFS OF STATE TO MEET WITH HIM IF THEY ARE IN WASHINGTON FOR THE PANAMA CANAL CEREMONY. OUR INTERESTS SECTION IN CUBA WILL OPEN AROUND 8/30. PERU HAS FINALLY RESOLVED ITS DISPUTE WITH GULF AND IS SEARCHING FOR WAYS OUT OF ITS FINANCIAL DILEMMA. WE HAVE SENT 2 OFFICERS TO GUANTANAMO TO DETERMINE WHETHER 101 HAITIAN REFUGEES SHOULD BE RETURNED.

2. TODMAN TRIP:
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APART FROM THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS GOVERNMENT LEADERS, THE LOCAL PUBLICITY GENERATED AT EACH STOP WAS AS INTENSE AS WE HAVE EVER SEEN. WE BELIEVE THE TRIP WILL CONTRIBUTE IMPORTANTLY TO OUR HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES IN THESE COUNTRIES. EVEN THE US MEDIA, TRADITIONALLY LIGHT ON LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS, HAS PICKED UP THE INTEREST. TERRY WAS INTERVIEWED ON NBC'S

TODAY SHOW, 8/24 AND WILL DO THE 30 MINUTE PRIME TIME MCNEIL-LEHRER PROGRAM EARLY NEXT WEEK. HIS TRIP AND THE OTHER RECENT ONES HAVE COMBINED TO FOCUS AN UNUSUAL AMOUNT OF US PUBLIC INTEREST ON THE HEMISPHERE.

3. PANAMA:

THE SIGNING CEREMONY FOR THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES HAS BEEN TENTATIVELY SET FOR 9/7 IN WASHINGTON. OAS SECY GEN ORFILA'S INVITATIONS TO LATIN AND CARIBBEAN CHIEFS OF STATE TO ATTEND THE CEREMONY IS BEING FOLLOWED BY A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER IN WHICH HE WILL INVITE EACH ONE OF THEM TO MEET WITH HIM WHEN THEY ARE IN WASHINGTON. YOU SHOULD BE RECEIVING THESE LETTERS FOR DELIVERY IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

4. CUBA:

LYLE LANE HAS BEEN APPOINTED HEAD OF OUR INTERESTS SECTION. LYLE EXPECTS TO BEGIN HIS DUTIES IN CUBA ON/ ABOUT 8/30.

5. PERU:

--PERU PAYS OFF GULF - AFTER LONG NEGOTIATION AND REPEATED DELAYS, THE GOP HAS FINALLY ISSUED A DECREE LAW PROVIDING COMPENSATION OF \$1.5 MILLION TO GULF FOR ITS GAS STATIONS
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AND STORAGE FACILITIES IN PERU, NATIONALIZED IN MAY 1975. THIS RESOLVES THE LAST OF THE NUMEROUS EXPROPRIATION CASES SINCE THE REVOLUTION OF 1968 AND REMOVES AN INHIBITION TO EXTENSION OF US ASSISTANCE TO THE COUNTRY. CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR EMBASSY, WHICH HAS DOGGEDLY PURSUED THE MATTER FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.

-- FINANCIAL CRISIS IN PERU- DICK ARELLANO AND OTHERS MET WITH A SPECIAL PERUVIAN CENTRAL BANK TEAM WHICH VISITED THE US TO TREAT WITH THE US BANKING SYNDICATE THAT LAST YEAR ADVANCED A CRITICAL BALANCE-OF-PAYMENTS LOAN TO PERU, AND WITH THE IMF. FACED WITH STAGGERING EXTERNAL OBLIGATIONS TO MEET THIS YEAR, PERU HAS ASKED THE BANKS FOR A ROLLOVER ON SHORT-TERM DEBT AND IS SEEKING TO PERSUADE THE FUND THAT THE MODIFIED AUSTERITY REGIME IN PERU PROVIDES SUFFICIENT BASIS FOR THE EXTENSION OF AN IMF STANDBY. THE PERUVIANS WOULD LIKE EMERGENCY US HELP AS WELL. WE HAVE ASKED FOR FURTHER ECONOMIC DATA.

6. HAITI:

101 HAITIANS EN ROUTE TO THE BAHAMAS ENTERED GUANTANAMO

NAVAL BASE AUGUST 10 IN A 40 FT WOODEN SAILBOAT
SHIPPING WATER. SINCE THEIR BOAT WOULD TAKE WEEKS TO
REPAIR AND COULD NOT SAFELY ACCOMMODATE MORE THAN 30
PEOPLE, THE NAVY HAS OFFERED TO RETURN THE HAITIANS TO
HAITI. THE HAITIANS HAVE REFUSED THE OFFER, ALTHOUGH
OUR EMBASSY IN PORT-AU-PRINCE HAS OBTAINED ASSURANCES
FROM THE HAITIAN GOVT THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE PUNISHED.
TO ASSIST THE NAVY IN RESOLVING THE PROBLEM, THE DEPT
HAS DETAILED TWO REFUGEE OFFICERS, TOGETHER WITH A
CREOLE-SPEAKING OFFICER FROM PORT-AU-PRINCE, TO GUANTANAMO
TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE IS ANY REASON WHY THE HAITIANS
SHOULD NOT BE RETURNED. CHRISTOPHER

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